

prayers or read a prescribed homily. They would not suffer learning and zeal to condone insubordination or eccentricity in small matters. " The bishops/" complained the Puritans in a petition to Parliament in 1586, "either preach not at all, or very seldom. And whereas the Scriptures say that ministers of the gospel should be such as are able to teach sound doctrine and convince gainsayers, yet the bishops have made priests of the lowest of the people, not only for their occupations and trades whence they have taken them, as shoemakers, barbers, tailors, waterbearers, shepherds, and horsekeepers, but also for their want of good learning and honesty. How true this our complaint is may appear by the survey of some shires and counties herewith annexed, even some of the best, whereof the rest may be estimated. . . . There are a great number within the ministry that live not upon the place where they are beneficed, but abandon their flocks, directly contrary to the charge of Christ. . . . Of this sort are sundry bishops who have benefices *in commendam*[^] university men, and chaplains at court; others get two or three benefices into their hands to serve them for winter and summer houses,— which pluralities and non-residences are the more grievous because they are tolerated by law. . . . But great numbers of the best qualified for preaching, and of the greatest industry and application to their spiritual functions, are not suffered quietly to discharge their duties, but are followed with innumerable vexations, notwithstanding they are neither heretics nor schismatics, but keep within the pale of the Church, and persuade others to do so who would have otherwise departed from it. They fast and pray for the queen and the Church, though they have been rebuked for it, and diversely punished by officers both civil and ecclesiastical. They are suspended and deprived of their ministry, and the fruits of their livings are sequestered for the payment of such a chaplain as their superiors think fit to employ. This has continued for many months and years notwithstanding the intercession of their people, of their friends, and sometimes of great personages, for their release. Last of all, many of them are committed to prison, whereof some have been chained with irons and continued in hard durance for a long time. To bring about these severities they tender to the suspected